

## Gaucin Walks II: Around El Hacho

Difficulty: Medium

Time: 2h 30 minutes

Terrain: rough paths and tracks

*A circular walk which passes through pine and cork oak forests.*

*Part of this walk is marked with two blue stripes; part of the walk also follows the GR141 (marked with red/white/yellow stripes) and part of the walk is marked with Roman numeral I (on ceramic plaques or blue paint).*

*Please leave all gates as you find them: keep dogs on a lead whenever livestock is loose and when passing near or through private property. Wear suitable footwear and carry sufficient water, especially in the summer months.*

*We welcome any feedback/comments to: [gaucindaywalks@gmail.com](mailto:gaucindaywalks@gmail.com)*

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**THE WALK:** Start at the Gaucin petrol station and walk up the small road to the right of the petrol station, which is called “Camino del Montoro”. There are two ceramic plaques on the corner of the wall in front: “Ruta I - Sierra del Hacho” and “Ruta II – La Claridad”.

Walk only a few metres along the road by the terraced housing and opposite Nos. 14 and 16 there is a metal gate on the left. Climb up just before the gate to find a small scrubby path that winds around the back of the petrol station and then bears right. You will see two blue stripes on a rock and a red/white/yellow marker on the fence ahead.

This rocky path widens and climbs steadily towards the peak of El Hacho ahead. You are walking between two fences. After a few minutes climbing you pass a red metal gate on the right and some dogs in a large caged kennel. Around the corner when the path forks, keep to the left fork (there is a wire gate across the right fork) and keep climbing on a well-trodden rocky path uphill. Where the path splits you can take either route; the left option up the rocks is a little easier, and is marked with white/red/yellow paint on a rock, but the right (lower) option soon joins it again. After a short wooded section you reach an open area and two electricity pylons – the ‘col’ of El Hacho - properly named “El Puerto de Los Hinojales”. There are lovely views of Gaucin and Cortes de la Frontera. *About 30 minutes to the col.*

Carry straight on, following a narrow path at the same level past a white/red/yellow post on the left marked “GR141”. Walk through the woods on a good path past some large rocks on the right. Ignore a blue arrow on a tree on the left and another one on a large rock. Keep following the main path and pass through an old wire and post gate (may be open).

At a small fork keep right on the better path, which goes downhill via a rocky path to a grassy area and a pylon. The path goes over a small streambed and past some fallen down concrete posts with blue stripes, then past a limestone oven and another pylon. You soon emerge at a newer gate just above a rough track. Pass through the gate and turn left onto the track.

After 5 minutes you come to a rocky gully. Walk down the rocky gully past a white/red/yellow marker on the rock on the right, heading downhill. When you see a fence ahead follow the main path around to the right. At a small fork keep right on the wider rocky path. Shortly after, when you see the ridge of El Hacho on the left by telegraph wires, bear left and down the main rocky path (do not take the small path into the trees straight ahead). Cross a streambed and take the wider right fork when the path splits (marked with a blue arrow); then follow the path that is just above a streambed on the right. You soon meet a gate marked with blue stripes and white/red/yellow paint; pass through the gate. At a small junction you need to drop downhill to the right – there is an easy-to-spot rock below on the right, marked with blue stripes and red/white/yellow paint. Shortly after this you meet a gate by a white house for forest guards. *About 1 hour 10 minutes to here.*

Go through the gate, ignore the sign: “IX Via Ferrata Sierra del Hacho” and turn right, walking downhill on the track, past a large tree on the corner. You pass a GR141 marker post on the right, and then meet a vehicular track and a large rock in front. Turn left onto the track and walk past peach coloured gateposts to “Labranzuela” and “El Peso”. Ignore red/white crosses on both sides of the track, and follow the track for **5 minutes** past a concrete water deposit, past a gate on the right to “El Peso No.2” and through a black metal gate.

Shortly after this gate, **by the second of two pylons** close together, look up to the left and take a grassy track going uphill towards the 'saddle' at the top. **THERE ARE NO MARKINGS HERE.** *If you reach gateposts to a farm just before the track bears right, you have gone too far.* Follow the grassy track uphill, bearing right to a large carob tree and then up the obvious route to the ridge ahead. *There may be livestock here so keep dogs on a lead.*

When you get to the top of the ‘saddle’ and an open grassy area, head left to a circular water station where you will meet a concrete track. Follow this track, ignoring a couple of rough tracks going down to the road below. After about 10 minutes from the water deposit the track forks - keep to the lower (right) path. The path becomes narrower and overgrown; when you can see a solitary farm building with an old tiled roof directly below you on the right it’s a good idea to leave the overgrown path and head downhill on a small path across the fields.

Keep going in the same direction across the fields, past one lot of fence posts (no fence) until you climb over a small crest and the way becomes more overgrown with a wire fence ahead. Go slightly left and uphill here to meet a wire and post gate in the fence. Go through the gate and keep following a small path. Turn right just before a ruin, and you will emerge on the main Gaucin road. Cross the road and turn left to return to the village by the petrol station.